

# PC Power Management Top Ten Tips

## *Implement PC Power Management Success*

### **1. Start Simple and Build from there**

In most cases the environment you are trying to put policies into is a business or at least the systems you are targeting are being used for a productive purpose. Attempting to save the most you can on the first pass is likely to cause too much impact and put people off PC Power Management right out of the gate.

If your users have never had to encounter their machines going to sleep during the day or their PCs being turned off at night then it will take some time to get used to the changes so get the big simple wins first and then fine tune your policies over time.

### **2. Get Executive Support and Budgetary Visibility as soon as possible**

You are going to change the way PCs behave and no matter what you do to avoid it, users will notice. Without the appropriate backing IT may lack the authority to be successful. A user may object even to clicking a mouse button to wake a system because they never had to before and carry enough authority to stop any attempt to save carbon and money; but with executive buy-in small objections can be overcome in order to achieve the bigger picture.

For finance, PC Power Management is a hard cost saving for the whole organisation but can be difficult to assign responsibility to. As a Green IT project it can be assumed that the cost will be carried by IT and in fact should be their responsibility as part of efficient practices, but IT normally does not get budgetary benefit from the savings. It is rare for IT to drive this kind of project by themselves unless there is already an existing organisation-wide Green or cost-saving initiatives. Find the appropriate stakeholders in order to make sure this can overcome the inevitable financial barriers in procurement.

### **3. You can do it yourself but...**

Yes you can tell users to switch off their machines at night but are they going to listen and always remember? PC Power Management to an individual is still an after-thought and users may even think that switching off the monitor is the same as switching off the PC. With all things that require human interaction it is something that requires continual reinforcement to maintain effectiveness which is why we invest in automated routines all of the time. A PC Power Management Solution avoids 'User Apathy'.

Yes you could write scripts to do these things or use GPOs to an extent and this is where the differentiators come in between basic and professional systems. Production environments have many complexities that self-scripting will need to overcome and this is why commercial solutions exist; if it was simple to achieve then there wouldn't be a viable market. In some cases simple will be fine but the 'exceptional circumstance' creates an issue; to deal with this exception the script will need to be enhanced in some way. This is how some solutions

were formed; someone somewhere decided they could do it themselves and eventually it grew so complex it became a product.

Without flexibility and granularity homegrown solutions soon wither and die due to lack of resource or escalate in their skills need. PC Power Management is a discipline of Systems Management and there are very few people that don't have some kind of investment in tools. To patch and deliver software these tools go above and beyond what the plain OS and GPO/Login Scripts provide and PC Power Management is no different.

#### **4. Screen Savers do not save power**

If anything these will consume more energy than if they weren't enabled at all. Screensavers are from a bygone era of screen burn where static images would burn themselves into the screen. While not totally eliminated they are really just for entertainment purposes now so should not be considered an aspect of power management. Why show an active screen when you could just turn the screen off and save energy? What exactly is the business benefit?

#### **5. PC Insomnia is not a laughing matter for business**

The OS is designed to easily allow systems to continue to run if there is even the slightest chance it might affect what a user needs the machine to do. If it was the default that a user had to say what could stop a machine going to sleep, then that OS manufacturer would have a very bad time of things. Look at how users hate being prompted to approve system changes with User Access Control (UAC)!

The OS therefore asks permission of running apps or backs off if it detects activity 'just in case' it might cause offence. This coupled with bad practice from application developers can mean in most businesses a significant proportion of devices are simply unable to sleep thereby wasting thousands for the business.

This means that just delivering a standard setting to the OS is not enough and we need the ability to handle this issue effectively.

#### **6. Metrics are always important**

It is rare that we are happy sending something out into the environment without knowing if it reached our machines or even if it worked so why should it be different for power management policies? Did our settings reach the machine and are they having an effect?

Without a PC Power Management solution you won't get metrics. You won't see if the policy is effective, you won't be able to show the savings being made, and you won't be able to show off to management and the rest of the world about how great you are!

## **7. PC Power Management is simple to install**

It doesn't take long to get something running. Verismic make this simple with easy onsite evaluation software that can be installed and agents deployed same day and we even offer a hosted capability so that you don't even need to install anything on your servers (or find a server to use).

You can be collecting metrics or even deploying policies if you are impatient the same day.

## **8. PC Power Management is Free**

This isn't a solution that gives 'Soft' savings of time; it saves actual cash and returns savings within 6-12 months for on-premise installations. In some places you can invest in this technology without using your own cash at all either through low-interest loans or rebates to pay for it entirely.

Few will do this if there is no return so the key is to get that return as quickly as possible and with hosted rental options that return can be virtually instantaneous as well.

## **9. Not all PC Power Management tools are created equal**

'They all do the same thing' has an element of truth but as the old saying goes, "It ain't what you do it's the way that you do it". Beware tick-box hell where someone says they do something and look at how it is done to see how much thought and care has gone into it. If you think you own something already you need to examine it and see what it really does.

Systems Management Suite vendors have pretty much all realized they need this capability and now say they do it but capabilities vary enormously. With every month that goes by where you don't have power save you lose more money for your business so a failed power management project due to lack of capability and flexibility causes you not only to lose money but also for the concept of PC Power Management to lose credibility.

Free or bundled still needs to be fit-for-purpose.

## **10. Be vocal about what you are achieving**

PC Power Management is in that rare bracket of being an IT project that is a real cost saver, helps the environment, and actually has a positive public perception due to the way Environmental issues are high on the general agenda.

Many of the most successful projects are tied with public exposure of the activities and results to help the company's image and promote their environmental credentials.

This is good for you, for the company, and for the environment in more ways than one, so don't be shy!